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## Indian Herpetological Society

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### WILDLIFE

PROTECTION..CONSERVATION...EDUCATION !





# Indian Herpetological Society



## Fast facts

Established in 1987 under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and Public Trust Rules, 1950 by eminent scientists, researchers and academicians

## Recognized by

- Central Zoo Authority of India (CZAI)
- Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI),
- Species Survival Commission (SSC) for the International
- Union of Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
- Declining Amphibian Task Force (DATF)

## Objectives

- To educate and disseminate scientific knowledge on Indian herpetofauna for the development of Herpetology in India
- To engage in rescue, rehabilitation and conservation of wildlife
- Engage in research and breeding programs for endangered species
- Conduct training and development programs

## Major projects undertaken

- Established the Pune Snake Park at Katraj, Pune in 1986 in association with the Pune Municipal Corporation and have been managing it for the last 27 years.
- Established the Wild Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre (ARRC) at Katraj, Pune
- Established and managed a small zoo at Chinchwad, Pune for the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation
- Established the School of Environment, Lonavla in 2010
- Developing Leopard Safari at Roha and upcoming zoo in Dhule district of Maharashtra.





## Activities of Indian Herpetological Society

### Survey of Snakes

IHS undertook a detailed survey of snakes in every district of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka to understand the diversity and population trends. It was the first survey of its kind addressing various issues and challenges. Killing of snakes due to traditional misbeliefs, poaching, illegal trade in snake skins, non scientific medication for snake bites were studied and addressed.

### Konkan Yatra

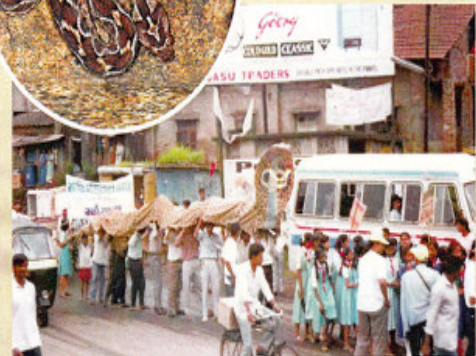
In 1995 IHS conducted 'Konkan Yatra' to create awareness and educate the villages along Konkan which lies midway between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. The region is densely forested with abundant wildlife and snakes, particularly the Saw scaled Viper. Over the years the population of this snake has declined due to illegal trafficking. The yatra successfully reached out to 80,000 people. Lectures, audio visuals, demonstrations were held highlighting the need for protecting the Saw scaled Viper.

### Training program for tribals in Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh

In 1997 the Madhya Pradesh government invited IHS to undertake a training program for tribals in Chhattisgarh region. A study revealed that deaths amongst the Adivasi tribal was highest due to snake bites. Snake bite prevention camps and training programs were held all over the region.

### Nagpanchami Celebrations

Traditionally this day has been celebrated by worshipping live snakes. IHS has singlehandedly changed this trend. Over the last 15 years IHS has advocated the worship of snake replicas or idols instead of live snakes. IHS has distributed snake replicas and persuaded people to worship snake replicas.



### Sarpa Yatra

In 2000 a 'Sarpa Yatra' was held in Goa and parts of Karnataka

### Training programs for zoo keepers, forest authorities etc.

IHS continuously conducts training programs for zoo keepers, forest guards, doctors, veterinarians, wildlife enthusiasts. The programs are organized with national / international organizations

### India Post Stamps

The Post Master General of India Post released a series of stamps depicting the rich heritage of snake fauna in India. This was done in association with the International Collector's Society.

### Sarpamitra Award

This award is presented on Nagpanchami day to a person who has made outstanding contribution to the field of Herpetology. An eminent panel selects the deserving candidate. A cash prize of Rs 25000 and a memento is presented. There have been ten awardees so far.



## Pune Snake park

The Pune Snake Park was inaugurated in 1986 by the late Shri Vitthalrao Gadgil, erstwhile Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. It has been maintained till date by IHS. The snake park was set up with the sole purpose of education and exhibition of snakes and is the first of its kind in Western India. Starting with a collection of 200 snakes. Today it is one of the leading snake parks of the country holding a diverse collection of snakes, crocodiles, turtles etc. It plays a vital role in education and dissemination of knowledge. It has developed various techniques of captive breeding of reptiles in captivity.

### •Conservation breeding programs successfully completed

Checkered Keelback (*Xenochrophis piscator*)

Rat Snake (*Ptyas mucosa*)

Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena helena*)

Indian Cobra (*Naja naja*)

Russell's Viper (*Daboia russelii*)

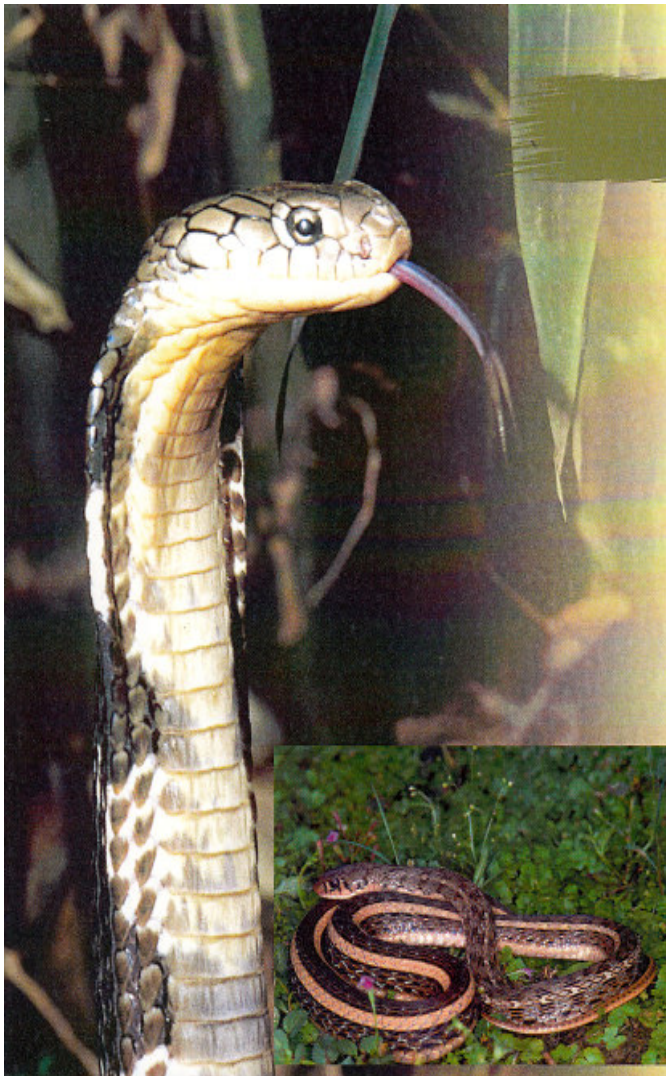
Sand Boa (*Gongylophis conicus*)

Grass Snake (*Macropisthadon plumbicolor*)

Starred Tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*)

Bamboo Pit Viper (*Trimerasurus gramineus*)

Monitor Lizard (*Varanus benghalensis*)







#### Innovation and creativity

Snake park planning and management needs innovation and creativity. Unlike other zoos where animals are seen 'active', snakes appear still and lifeless. They rarely move and is a challenge to engage the visitor. IHS has been so successful that the visitor footfalls have been increasing stupendously year after year.

#### Education and training programs

- Snake bite management for doctors and veterinarians and aspirants
- First aid treatment for snake bites



#### 24 hour helpline

The Pune Snake park has a dedicated 24 hour helpline for wild animal rescue. Initially started for snakes that were found in the city, it receives distress calls for wild animals and birds







Set up in 1992 adjacent to the Pune Snake park, ARRC is a joint initiative between the Pune Municipal Corporation and Indian Herpetological Society.

#### Objectives

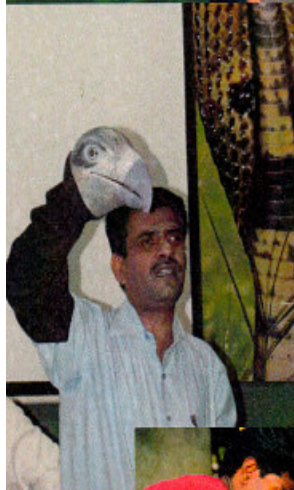
- Rescue sick, injured, or orphaned animals and birds
- Specialized care for injured animals and birds
- Rehabilitation and release of those animals that are treated and fit to survive in their environment.



ARRC has a specialized team that handle complex rescue operations. Two mobile rescue vans, equipment medical supplies attend to emergencies. In addition, a facility with specialized care, an operation theater, pre and post operative care, quarantine wards, electric fence enclosures and other enclosures have been suitably modified for specific animal requirements, including temperature control for faster recovery. CCTV cameras monitor certain critically injured animals.

Although most animals are temporarily displaced, a number of them require a long term acclimatization for rehabilitation or even lifetime care. Some of them are hand reared at ARRC and then relocated suitably in the wild. Animals that have permanent injury or damage or confiscated illegal consignments of non native animals and birds which are unable to survive in the wild are housed permanently at the centre. Some of these may play a vital role in ex-situ breeding programs. Being the leading rescue facility it also serves as a training centre on rescue management and techniques .

Today it has been recognized as among the best rescue and rehabilitation centre in India. It has rescued and rehabilitated more than 20,000 animals and birds.







## Animal Rescue Centre







## School of Environment



The School of Environment was established in 2010 at Waksai, near Lonavala. The school differs from the traditional concept of a school and does not have full time students. It is a centre for research and explores alternative approaches towards eco friendly living.

### Research priorities

- Green affordable and energy efficient alternatives
- Clean and safe drinking water in villages
- Reuse or upcycle waste for economic benefit to rural

### Communities

More than 350 models demonstrate the above mentioned priorities. Other models include a boat made of used soft drink bottles, cardboard furniture, solar pressure cooker, solar cooker made from discarded suitcases, a washing machine made from a lawn-mower etc. Water lifting footstep, a windmill made from used plastic water bottles, water pumping swing are displayed.

Every model is made from scrap and discarded material.

The school conducts free training workshops for local communities, women and school children. Education officers also visit nearby schools and give presentations.







Plastic Bottle Boat



Mobile Washing Machine



Water Pumping Swing



Lawn- mower



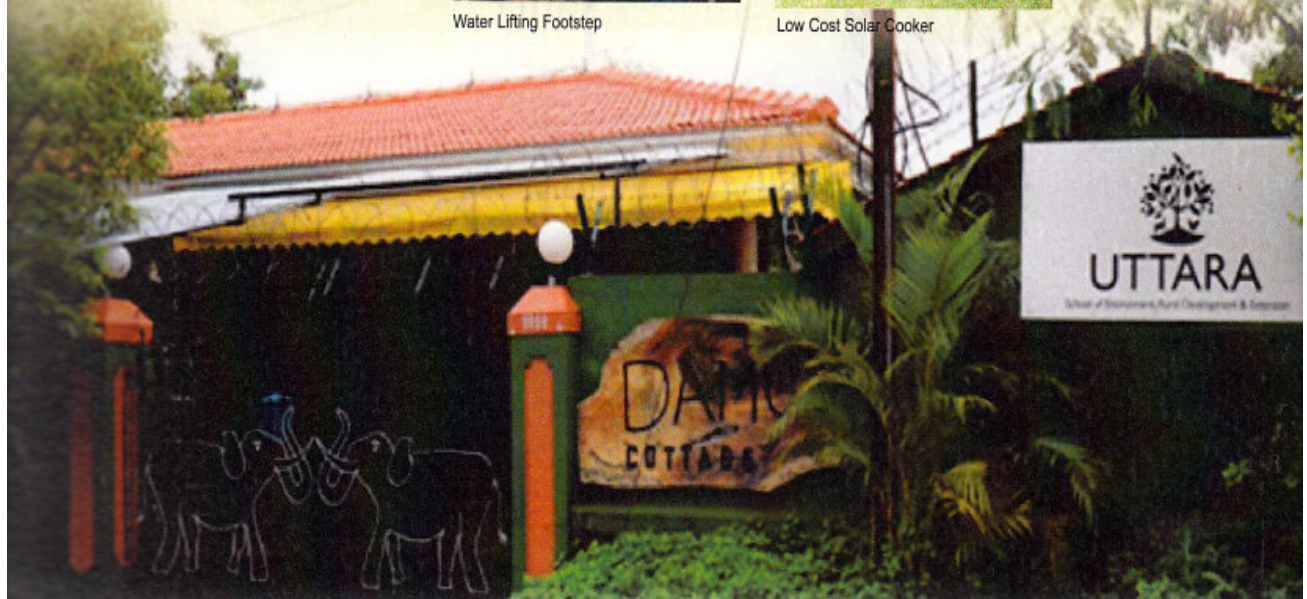
Solar Pressure Cooker



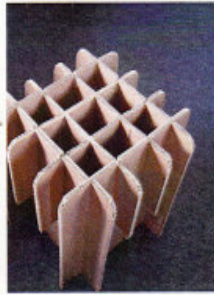
Water Lifting Footstep



Low Cost Solar Cooker





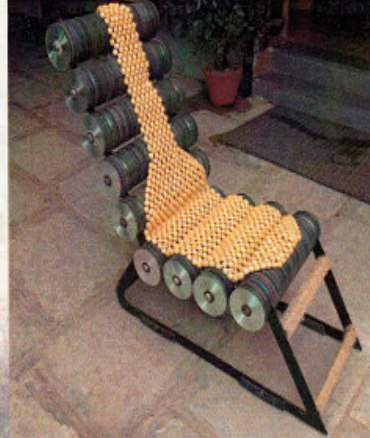


## School of Environment

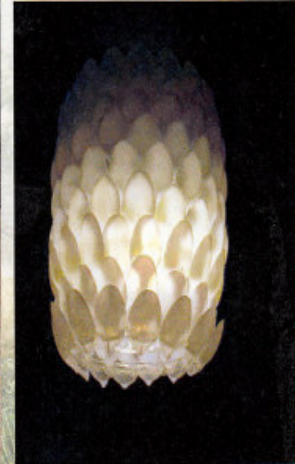
Recycled Furniture



Battery Charging Fitness Cycle



Recycled Furniture made of CDs



Recycled Sky-lamp



Low Cost Solar Cooker





## Publications:

### Booklets

#### Sap Mhanava Apla

(A Marathi booklet on interesting facts about snakes)

### Charts & Posters

1. First Aid on snake bites
2. Identification of venomous snakes
3. Awareness pictorial posters were produced and distributed among the villagers of man leopard conflict areas.
4. Multilanguage signages were prepared for the important highway passing through the northern Western Ghats.



## Books

### Indian Snakes (English and Marathi)

Published in the 1990, these books were an introduction to the world of Indian snakes. Written in simple language with colored photographs, it served as an excellent source of information.

### Maitra jeevanche (Marathi), Beyond Friendship (English)

Published in 1998, this book is engaging and thought provoking. It gives first-hand accounts of heart rendering encounters and anecdotes with wild animals and snakes.

### Chandukaka (Marathi and English)

This delightful book for children introduces them to the natural world. Neelinkumar takes them on a journey of discovery and shares interesting facts about flies, insects, birds, mammals, etc.

### Sarpa...Mitra Manavacha (Snake... A friend of Man)

This book for the common man is meant to educate and remove misbeliefs and myths. It features commonly encountered venomous and non venomous Indian snakes in a scientific perspective. It also provides useful information on snake identification, prevention of snake bites, first-aid, and snake bite treatment

### A Guide to the Snakes of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka

Published in 2004, this book as the name suggests is a field guide to Herpetologists, Naturalists, Doctors and students of science. Farmers, NGO, Government authorities have also used this book extensively. It has also been compiled in the form of an e-guide that takes the reader through seamlessly.

### Saap (Marathi), Snake (English)

This book was published in 2010. It is a listing of commonly found Indian snakes featuring 57 species. It also provides valuable information about how to avoid snake bites, first aid treatment. It is very useful in snake identification for farmers, trekkers and students.

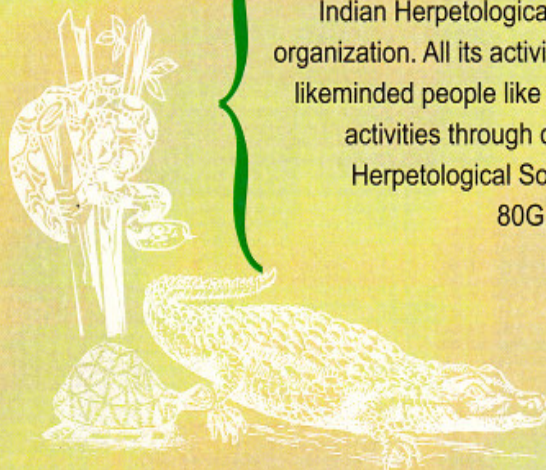
### Guidelines for the upkeep of Reptiles in Zoos and Parks

This book was published in 2009 with a view to provide information and knowledge for management and maintenance of reptiles. It addresses the basic principles of scientific management of reptiles in captivity. The Central Zoo Authority of India (CZAI) provided the funds for this book. It included studying 18 major zoos and parks across India. The book is a useful resource for zoos and parks all over the world.





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